

**TRANSMITTAL LETTER
(General - Patent Pending)**

Docket No.
00280619AA

In Re Application Of: F. Cheng, et al.

Serial No.
09/551,118

Filing Date
April 17, 2000

Examiner
B. Jaketic

Group Art Unit
3627

Title: **LARGE INVENTORY-SERVICE OPTIMIZATION IN CONFIGURE-TO-ORDER SYSTEMS**

TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:

Transmitted herewith is:

STATEMENT OF INTERVIEW SUMMARY

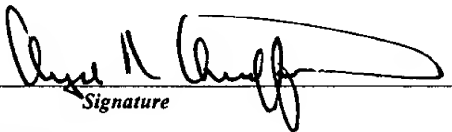
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Dated: April 12, 2004

Clyde R Christofferson
Reg No. 34,138
Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson, P.c.
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340
Reston, Virginia 20190
703-787-9400
Customer number: 30743

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YOR9-2000-0041
Statement dated 04/12/2004

09/551,118
Reply to Interview Summary mailed 04/07/2004

1

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of

Feng Cheng et al.

Serial No. 09/551,118

Group Art Unit 3627

Filed April 17, 2000

Examiner B. Jaketic

For LARGE INVENTORY-SERVICE OPTIMIZATION IN CONFIGURE-TO-
ORDER SYSTEMS

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STATEMENT OF INTERVIEW

Sir:

In response to the Interview Summary mailed April 7, 2004, please enter the following statement of the substance of the interview, submitted in accordance with MPEP §713.04:

On 3/30/2004 the undersigned arranged with Examiner Bryan Jaketic for a telephone interview on 4/1/2004, the interview to include co-inventor Dr. Markus Ettl. A copy of the amendment formally submitted on 3/29/2004 was faxed to the Examiner on 3/31/2004.

The main focus of the interview was the chart attached to the amendment submitted 3/29/2004. The chart compared results obtained from application of the present invention with results obtained from the method described in the Aykin prior art reference. This chart used the example given in the specification, and compared

the results of the invention's method with that of the Aykin prior art. The purpose of the chart was to provide a graphic demonstration of the differences between the two methods, and in particular to demonstrate that Aykin fails to provide cost-optimal inventory policies when component costs are not identical.

Dr. Ettl explained the columns of the chart to the Examiner. The first column identified each of the seventeen components or building blocks used in the product example. The second column showed the unit cost of each component. The next column shows a calibration factor (customer service level) so that the models would be comparing apples to apples. The remaining columns in the chart are a set of columns for the invention and a parallel set of columns for the Aykin reference.

The first column in each of the respective sets of columns shows an inventory level safety factor. Dr. Ettl pointed out that the invention generated a lower safety factor for the components with higher costs (e.g. BB1), whereas Aykin's model did not take component cost differences into account. The results of this distinction are evident in the last two columns in the set, which show a) the higher total cost of inventory in the Aykin model, even though b) Aykin's model produced the lower total number of units in the base stock level. Dr. Ettl gave the opinion that Aykin would always show a lower number of total units, although they had not formally tested that proposition.

It had been the Examiner's contention that Aykin's lower number of total units would "inherently" result in reduced total cost. But the chart was a graphic demonstration of the contrary, and the Examiner was persuaded. The claims provided as a limitation that the cost of at least one component differed from the cost of at least one other component. The Examiner noted that the latest amendment (to claims 1, 5, 8, 13 and 15) included the linkage between the component cost difference and the inventory stock levels, and he was satisfied that Aykin had been distinguished. I

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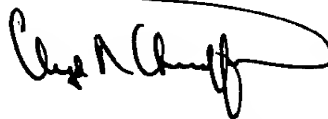
09/551,118
Reply to Interview Summary mailed 04/07/2004

3

asked whether we could therefore expect a prompt allowance, and he indicated that he would first have to update his search.

If an extension of time is required for this response to be considered as being timely filed, a conditional petition is hereby made for such extension of time. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account 50-0510 (IBM-Yorktown).

Respectfully submitted,



Clyde R Christofferson
Reg. No. 34,138

Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson, P.C.
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340
Reston, VA 20190
703-787-9400
703-787-7557 (fax)

Customer No. 30743



30743

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